CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.901
16 May 2002

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE NINE HUNDRED AND FIRST PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 16 May 2002, at 10.20 a.m.

President: Mr. Markku Reimaa (Finland)

GE.02-61469 (E) 230502 270502

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 901st plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I welcome you all back to Geneva and to the Conference on Disarmament, and at the outset, let me also, on behalf of the Conference, extend a warm welcome to the new Permanent Representative of Australia, Ambassador Michael Smith, and assure him of our cooperation and support in his new assignment.

If you permit, I have a few words to address to this first plenary meeting of the second half of the Finnish presidency.

When we last met on 28 March, your President invited specific ideas on how we might unblock the current impasse in the Conference. Since 28 March, we have continued bilateral discussions and consultations on that basis. I must confess that I am personally encouraged, and we will intensify these contacts during the last week of the Finnish presidency.

It has been mentioned here on several occasions that the Conference on Disarmament does not exist in isolation from the outside world. I believe that this is particularly true today. It is my hope that we can make common conclusions on that basis. The main purpose of our efforts has been and still is to help us engage in practical and substantive work as soon as possible and in that way to bring about a change in the experience of recent years. Everybody knows that a possible initiation of work would make a difference to our current daily routines, but we have been convinced in our consultations that practically all delegations would be ready to contribute to that kind of change.

The last meeting of the Finnish presidency will take place next Thursday, 23 May. We will be in touch with you before that through the presidential consultations channel and, as we have tried to indicate, our delegation remains available for discussions any time you might wish.

As to today's scenario, I do not have any speakers on my list for the moment. I am ready to give the floor to anybody wishing to address the meeting. I recognize the distinguished representative of Spain, Ambassador Miranda.

Mr. MIRANDA (Spain) (translated from Spanish): I take the floor on behalf of the European Union. The European Union welcomes the announcement that, next week, the Presidents of the United States of America and the Russian Federation will sign an agreement to reduce their nuclear arsenals. The European Union is convinced that this positive event will provide a new opportunity for relaunching the substantive work of the Conference on Disarmament.

We encourage the President of the Conference, Ambassador Reimaa, to continue his efforts to reach a consensus that will lead to the resumption of the Conference's work at the earliest possible stage. We urge all delegations to assist the President in this undertaking.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of Spain for his statement and thank the European Union for the support that they have shown towards our efforts. Does anyone else wish to take the floor today?

Before adjourning this meeting, I would like to recall that the Special Coordinator on the Expansion of the Membership of the Conference, Ambassador Tzantchev of Bulgaria, will hold informal open-ended consultations on this topic immediately following this plenary meeting. So we might have a short break after this plenary. Furthermore, before closing, I would like to inform you that the Special Coordinator on the Improved and Effective Functioning of the Conference, Ambassador Kariyawasam of Sri Lanka, will hold informal open-ended consultations on his topic not on Tuesday, as originally indicated, but next Thursday, 23 May, after the official plenary.

The next plenary will be in one week's time, Thursday, 23 May, starting at 10 a.m., and I hope that we might take a flexible approach in what will be the last plenary meeting under the Finnish presidency. Please make sure that you have the necessary time available. I am even keeping the option open that we might open that plenary with an informal meeting first.

The meeting rose at 10.25 a.m.